

An approach to implementing meaningful Communicative language  
activity material in Arabic for use at Primary School Level.  
A case study at Cravenby Secondary School.

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts M.Phil (ed.)  
In the Faculty of Education at the  
University of the Western Cape  
1995

Supervisor: Ed Katz

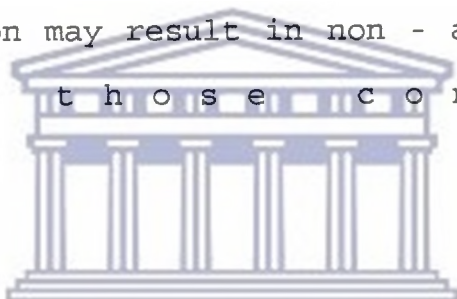
Assistant Supervisor: Yasien Mohamed

October 1995

DECLARATION

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Reedwaan Ismail

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt gratitude goes to all my teachers, lecturers, parents and friends who have over the years inspired me with the desire to pursue a career in Islamic / Arabic studies. The completion of this mini - thesis is the culmination of many years of encouragement and motivation from my teachers, lecturers, parents and friends. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following individuals:

Ustaaz Adam Peerbhai, the Director of the Islamic Centre of Cape Town, under whose guidance I was initiated into reading the *Qur'an* at the tender age of six. I started the memorization of the *Qur'an* under his supervision;

Ustaaz Hashim Bulbullia who was my *madrassa* teacher whilst I was attending High School and under whose supervision I continued with the memorization of the *Qur'an*;

Imaam Shamsudien Ebrahim, the principal of *Madrassa Shamsul Islam* in Salt River, under whose guidance I completed, through the Grace of Allah, the memorization of the *Qur'an*;

Dr Mahmud Ismail Seiny, the Director of the Institute of Arabic language, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and the excellent team of language teachers. In particular Ustaaz Ahmad Hamad and Ustaaz K Dosh who encouraged us to continue with the task of teaching the Arabic language to adults and children in South Africa;

Drs. Muhammed Haron, Drs. Yasien Mohamed and Ustaaz Mukhtar Ahmed who were my lecturers whilst I was registered in the Arabic Department at the University of the Western Cape. In particular I am indebted to Drs. Y Mohamed for his encouragement and constructive criticism.

Dr Sinfree Makoni, co - ordinator of the M. Phil (ed.) programme in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape and his dedicated team of lecturers who lectured in the M.Phil (ed.) course;

My supervisor and lecturer, Mr Ed Katz, who encouraged, guided, advised and motivated me in completing this mini - thesis;

My assistant supervisor and lecturer from the Arabic Department at the University of the Western Cape, Drs. Yasien Mohamed to whom I am indebted in more ways than one for his encouragement, discussions and interviews;

Mrs Monica van Heerden for her encouragement and constructive comments;

My colleagues, in particular Mr Hoosain Ally and Mr Hassan Osman for their assistance, advice, encouragement, discussions and interviews;

My colleague, Mr Ashraf Maharaj for proof reading the text;

Mr R Sookraj, the Principal of Cravenby Secondary School and the pupils I taught and from whom I have gained in more ways than one. They have not only provided me with the opportunity to gain my teaching experience, but also actively participated in the research activities I conducted with them for the continuation and completion of my research;

Last, but not least, my appreciation and thanks goes to my parents, brothers, especially Nazeem Ismail and sisters for their support and encouragement throughout my study career.

My prayer is, may Allah reward you all with His Mercy.



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The following English Transcription of the Arabic alphabet was used in the transliteration of Arabic words.

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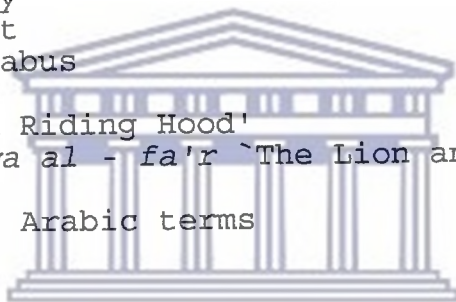
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Arabic language is a means by which the culture, beliefs and myths of Arabic speaking communities in the world can be understood. The ability to communicate, read and write in the Arabic language, can be used to research, read and write about the customs, traditions, folklore, habits, poetry, music, history and literature of the people where Arabic is considered the mother tongue.

The majority of Muslims in South Africa have their roots in various countries around the world such as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Madagascar, Turkey. One common denominator amongst all these people in South Africa and around the world is that they recite the same *Qur'an*. The overwhelming majority of Muslims in South Africa find themselves in a very precarious situation. They are able to phonetically recognise and articulate the Arabic words in the *Qur'an*, but they do not comprehend its meaning in Arabic. The majority of Muslims in South Africa do not understand the Arabic language. Thus, they do not read Arabic texts such as Arabic journals, Arabic newspapers, Arabic literature nor Arabic poetry. The recent establishment of diplomatic links with the Middle East and African countries makes the learning of Arabic all the more important. Not only will diplomatic links be established, but cultural links as well.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (act 200 of 1993) states that "every person shall have the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice" (p 16 (31)). The Constitution further states that " no person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, and, without derogating from the generality of this provision, on one or more of the following grounds in particular race, gender ... religion, conscience, belief, culture or language" (p 8 8(2)). The Constitution further encourages "the fostering of respect for languages spoken in the Republic other than the official languages", and encourages its use in appropriate circumstances. (p 6 9(c)). The government has established the Pan South African Language Board which is "responsible for promoting respect for and the development of German, ... Urdu and other languages used by communities in South Africa, as well as Arabic, Hebrew and Sanskrit and other languages used for religious purposes" (p 6 10(e)). The existence, respect and promotion of the Arabic language has been enshrined in the South African Constitution. Arabic is recognised as a language used by communities in South Africa even though it is mainly used for religious and ceremonial functions at this point in time.

## 1.2 Goal of the study

This study focuses on the following:

Descriptive:                   Description of how Arabic is taught at the *Madrassa* and School.

Theoretical:            Suggesting why and how a Communicative and meaning making approach, as described by Britton, Rouse and others, might be introduced to Arabic teaching at Primary School level.

In order to meet the study objectives, the following goals are formulated:

- Chapter two discusses pupils' Arabic competence, *Madrassa* education, a critique of the textbook *Yassarnal Qur'an* and the Arabic language they are taught.
- Chapter three critiques the teaching approach, syllabus and the textbook used in the teaching of Arabic at Cravenby Secondary School. (Sub. A to Std. 10).
- Chapter four develops a theoretical overview for the approach adopted.
- Chapter five outlines the technique adopted in the teaching of the story.
- Chapter six concludes the study by making general observations, and making recommendations for future research.

### 1.3 Rationale for the Study

Over the years many students became despondent with the teaching approach adopted at Cravenby Secondary School. For many years the Arabic language was only offered up to standard five as a non examinable subject. However, since 1994 it is being offered in the High School as an examinable

subject.

In 1993 I started teaching at Cravenby Secondary School, (Sub. A to Std. 10). During that year I did not teach the Arabic language.

I, however, enquired from teachers regarding their teaching approach of the Arabic language. I also questioned the pupils about their opinion towards the language and the approach used by teachers. The overwhelming response by the pupils was that they had to learn the meaning of words in isolation and out of context. The pupils felt that with this type of teaching approach they were not learning to converse in the Arabic language. In 1994, I was granted the opportunity to teach Arabic from standard 2 - 5.

The Arabic teachers also pointed out the lack of relevant source materials to teach the subject. Taking the above into consideration I felt that an alternative approach to the teaching of Arabic at Cravenby Secondary School should be investigated.

#### 1.4 Research Method and Sources of Data

This study aims at examining the shortcomings of the Arabic syllabus, teaching approach and the lack of relevant source materials available, if any, to teachers. The research method is based on active observation of the Arabic teaching pedagogies. The research is, however, not scientific, but suggestive of the possibilities to an alternative teaching approach. It is also an informed study based on the introduction of translated stories.

### 1.5 Aim of the Study

It is envisaged that the communicative and meaning making approach which allows for the introduction of stories to be read with comprehension outlined below will be beneficial to teachers in their classroom practice. It attempts to point out to teachers that Arabic can more easily be acquired by being exposed to the appropriate teaching approach.

Teachers should experiment and explore the "Communicative Approach" which includes activities such as writing, reading, comprehending questions, singing, poetry, completing exercises and conducting exercises in class.

### 1.6 Limitations of the Study

The research has been constrained by both time and resource materials. With regard to the source materials it was time consuming drawing the pictures on the charts and on the board. I found that when a sketch is drawn on the board, pupils became rowdy and noisy. It takes a while to settle the pupils down before the lesson can be resumed. Teachers therefore, should be provided with pictures and charts in order to facilitate the progress of the lesson.

Due to the limited number of Arabic periods at my disposal certain comprehension exercises could not be administered. I, however, included the exercises at the end of the dissertation. The three half an hour periods per week proved inadequate to complete the work set out for the period. By the time the pupils settle down very little time is left

of the period. The lesson inevitably has to be continued the next time I meet the pupils. I was not able to make an audio recording of the play and conversations due to the unavailability of audio recording equipment at School and the high cost of hiring it over a period of time.

The translation of the stories from English to Arabic was intrinsically rewarding for me, but took up many painstaking hours. My own theoretical inexperience led me to translating stories which were familiar to the pupils rather than translating stories which were unfamiliar to the pupils. The above limitations should be borne in mind when judging the merits or demerits of the "Communicative Approach" to the teaching of Arabic.



## CHAPTER 2

### ARABIC AT 'MADRASSA'

#### 2.1 PUPILS' ARABIC COMPETENCE

In 1994, 56 of the 67 pupils in the standard two class at Cravenby Secondary School resided in Cravenby. Currently, only 39 of the 67 (58%) pupils attend the *madrassa* in the afternoon at the above mentioned school. A further 25 (37%) pupils attend another *madrassa* in the area whilst only 3 (5%) pupils do not attend at all. The results show that 64 pupils (95%) attend a *madrassa* after school.

I enquired about their Arabic competence by directing a few questions to pupils in Arabic. For example, I asked them "kayfa haluka ?" , "Masmuka ?" and "Kayfa sihatuk ?" which means "How are you ?", "What is your name ?" and "How is your health ?" respectively. The pupils seemed confused and said to me that they did not know what I asked them. I concluded from this exercise that pupils did not comprehend and speak the Arabic language.

A language is acquired for the purpose of conversing, reading and writing. After attending a *madrassa* I wrongfully assumed that pupils would have had some knowledge of the Arabic language. This, however, was not the case and I decided to enquire what pupils were taught. But, this will be discussed at a later stage.

Since the teaching of Arabic was not addressed I introduced the standard two pupils to reading with comprehension and the writing of stories in Arabic.

## 2.2 'MADRASSA' EDUCATION

Pupils are taught the following lessons, : the *kalima*, short *suwar*, History, *Yassarnal Qur'an*, Quranic recitation and the Arabic language. Below is a breakdown of the sections taught to the pupils.

### 2.2.1 'KALIMA'

Pupils are taught the first two *kalimatan* with its meaning in English and from standard three onwards they are taught the remaining five *kalimaat*. It is taught by continuous repetition in a group setting with the English meaning. The two proclamations of faith taught to the pupils are as follows:

i) لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah [the creator of the universe] and Muhammad (peace be upon him. pbuh) is His Prophet.

ii) أشهد لا إله إلا الله وأشهد

أن محمد رسول الله

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah [the creator of the universe] and I bear witness that Muhammad (pbuh) is His Prophet.



### 2.2.2 SHORT `SURA'

Pupils have to memorise the short *suwar* which are located at the end of the *Qur'an* so that it could be chanted in their prayers. Possessing the ability to phonetically recognise and recite the Arabic words facilitates the memorisation of the short *suwar*. Pupils learn the *suwar* at home on their own since they are able to phonetically recognise the words of the Arabic script. The teacher revises the lesson a few times which is repeated in chorus by the pupils.

### 2.2.3 HISTORY OF THE PROPHETS



The histories of the Prophets such as Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them. pbut) are related in a story form to the pupils. They are given cyclostyled notes in English which they paste in their books.

### 2.2.4 `YASSARNAL QUR'AN'

In the first year of the pupils' entry into *madrassa* they are taught from a textbook titled *Yassarnal Qur'an*. The aim of the book is to teach the Arabic alphabet and gradually introduce the child to chant words and short sentences. A large proportion of the pupils in standard two, 43 of the 67 taking Arabic as a subject (63%) are still in the process of completing the *Yassarnal Qur'an*.

#### 2.2.4.1 CRITIQUE OF 'YASSARNAL QUR'AN'

The textbook *Yassarnal Qur'an* which is used at Cravenby *madrassa* to teach pupils to recognise and pronounce words was compiled in Pakistan. Arabic is taught to Pakistani pupils from this textbook. The Urdu alphabet is the same as the Arabic alphabet except for minor variations in the shape of a letter or the position of the dots. The textbook uses Urdu instructions to introduce the lessons which are not understood by the majority of pupils at *madrassa*.

The individual letters are initially taught without the dots which are placed below or above the letter when in actual fact it forms part of the letter. For example, the letter 'ta'  is distinguished from the letter 'tha'  by the one extra dot it has. The letters are also taught without the diacritical marks on them. In Arabic every letter can take one of the seven diacritical marks as shown below.



The presentation of the words in the lessons are separated by small spaces between them. To a beginner it looks like a continuous line of words. Perhaps, the words should have been circled, blocked off or spaced out so that it does not look like a conglomeration of words.

Below are a few examples to illustrate the point that letters are joined to form either Urdu words or any letter is joined to each other to form a 'word'.

On pages 14 - 17 only 70 of the 271 words are Arabic. On pages 18 - 20, only 5 of the 200 words are Arabic. On pages 21 - 24, 85 (33%) of the 259 words have an Arabic origin. On pages 24 - 25, 56 (20%) of the 287 words have an Arabic origin. On pages 25 - 31, 118 (22%) of the 526 words have an Arabic origin.

The statistics quoted above confirm the speculation that pupils are taught to learn and repeat words which have no meaning in Arabic and which they will never come across in their Arabic reading texts.

#### 2.2.5 'READING' THE QUR'AN

Twenty - five out of a total of sixty - seven pupils (37%) in the standard two classes are presently chanting Arabic verses from the Qur'an. Pupils 'read' hesitantly because many of the words which they are required to repeat and learn from the *Yassarnal Qur'an* do not appear in the Qur'an. They are, therefore, not familiar with the phonetic sound of the words and also experience difficulty in recognising the words in the Quranic text.

#### 2.2.6 ARABIC LANGUAGE

With regard to the Arabic language pupils are given a list of words such as table, chair, girl and boy, both in English and in Arabic. Pupils are expected to learn how it is written and its meaning. When an English word is given the pupil must supply the Arabic word and vice versa.

This exercise is done both orally and in writing. Sentences which incorporate words that were taught are written on the blackboard. The pupils pronounce it accompanied with the translation in English. The pupils are then required to take down the sentences in their books which form part of their writing exercise.

### 2.3 SUMMARY

The only knowledge of Arabic the pupils have gained at *madrassa* is that they have mastered the Arabic alphabet. They are able to recognise to a certain degree individual letters and words and are able to pronounce it. Despite knowing a few words pupils are not able to read literary texts in modern standard Arabic. The only writing skill they have developed is to copy words and sentences from the blackboard. They lack the ability to communicate their basic needs in the Arabic language. Neither are they able to relate their experiences in the verbal or written form. In the final analysis the emphasis in the *madrassa* is more on learning how to recognise and phonetically pronounce words rather than concentrating on Reading Comprehension.

## CHAPTER 3

### ARABIC AT CRAVENBY SECONDARY SCHOOL

#### 3.1 ARABIC TEACHING

My exposure to Arabic at the King Saud University in Saudi Arabia no doubt shaped my opinion regarding the teaching of Arabic at Cravenby Secondary School. At the above University I was exposed to the Arabic immersion programme where only Arabic was used as a means of communication. In my first year of teaching at Cravenby Secondary School, however, I did not teach Arabic, but shared ideas and concerns with the Arabic teachers. In the second year of my teaching career I was given an opportunity to teach Arabic. I intended making good use of the opportunity by experimenting with alternative teaching approaches.

This chapter focuses on how reading, writing and grammar is taught to pupils by teachers. It highlights the problems experienced by teachers in trying to achieve the aims and objectives of the syllabus.

In this regard, Mr Hoosain Ally and Mr Hassan Osman, who taught Arabic at the School for a number of years, were interviewed.

#### 3.2 READING

One of the aims of the standard two Arabic syllabus is " to teach pupils to read fluently and with understanding " (E.C Circular no. 42 of 1990).

When teaching 'reading' Mr H Ally starts with the assumption that the pupils in standard two have the ability

to recognise and pronounce Arabic words. However, in his teaching career he found that there were pupils who could not phonetically pronounce the Arabic characters because they never attended a *madrassa*. Due to time constraints it is also not possible to give individual attention to these pupils in class.

The Arabic textbook 'Modern Arabic Reader std. 2' by Abdul Razzack introduces two, three and four letter words which are written on the board by the teacher and is repeated aloud to the class. The pupils repeat the words along with the meaning in English. If the teacher feels that the pupils are not pronouncing the words properly then a few pupils who are able to pronounce the words correctly will come to the front of the class, point to the words with a pointer and pronounce the words, thereafter the rest of the class will repeat it.

A strategy which teachers use to reinforce the words learnt for the day is to give pupils handouts on which the words are written together with the English meaning. The pupils paste these handouts in their books and are expected to revise it from time to time.

The vocabulary used in the textbook is classroom based in that pupils are taught the Arabic words for pen, book, table and chair. Arabic phrases such as 'A black pen', 'Qalam al - aswad', 'The heavy book', 'kitab al - thaqil, are taken from the prescribed textbook by the teacher and taught to the pupils.

The syllabus prescribes that as part of the pupils' reading development they should be given Qur'anic texts to

read. These short texts are taken from the textbook and pupils are taught to chant it. In most cases pupils have already memorized the short passages (*sura*) which coincidentally are the same as the ones they were taught at *madrassa*.

### 3.3 WRITING

Another aim of the standard two Arabic syllabus is to allow pupils " to express themselves correctly and clearly in the spoken and written Arabic ... " (E.C Circular no.42 of 1990).

Mr H Ally and Mr H Osman interpret the above aim in the following manner. The vocabulary is taken from the book 'Modern Arabic Reader std 2' and is written on the blackboard. The pupils follow their hand movement and also listen to the explanation given by them as the letters and words are written on the blackboard. Each pupil receives two exercise books which are labelled, 'Source Book' and 'Application Book'. The Source Book is used to write down the vocabulary that the teacher writes on the blackboard along with the English meaning. The pupils have to revise these words after they have written them down. Spelling tests are conducted to check if pupils are able to write the words correctly. When students make too many mistakes in the tests, appropriate measures such as corrections and retests are conducted until the teachers are satisfied with the spelling results of the pupils.

On the other hand, the Application Book is used to take down sentences which are constructed from the words in the Source Book. Pupils take down these short sentences with their meanings and they are required to read them. Writing lessons

which are based on the errors made by pupils are drawn up by the two teachers to assist pupils with the letter and word formation.

### 3.4 GRAMMAR

The grammar translation method is still adopted at Cravenby Secondary School. This method is "inherited from the teaching of Latin, a language which was not taught for active use in any language community" (Finocchiaro & Brumfit 1983: 4). The grammar - translation method came under attack because great emphasis was placed on the learning of the rules of the language rather than the use of the language.

Arabic sentences fall into various categories and have different parts of speech. In Arabic, as in Latin, the subject, object or verb is expressed through different endings attached to the word stem and this reflects different cases of grammar and is classified in terms of nominative, accusative and genitive.

However, grammar seems to play a pivotal role in the learning of Arabic as outlined in the Arabic syllabus of the Ex - House of Delegates. The purpose for teaching Arabic grammar is to let pupils "develop the necessary language skills which would contribute to effective expression and communication" amongst pupils. (E. C. Circular no. 42 of 1990). Under the heading 'language study' it goes on to say that " it is important that pupils are familiar with the basics of its grammar " (Ibid). The 'basics' of the grammar include the following topics that have to be taught to the



pupils. They are:

Simple nouns (masculine and feminine)

Demonstrative Pronouns (*Hadha* and *Hadhihi*)

Interrogative particle `Ma'

Definitive article

Personal Pronouns (*Ana, Anta, Anti, Huwa, Hiya*)

Interrogative Particle `Man' and `Hal' with the words `Na'am and La'

Prepositions (*Fi, Ala* and *Tahta*)

Interrogative `Ayna'

Possessive Pronouns

Adjectives ( singular masculine and feminine)

Mr H Ally and Mr H Osman teach Arabic grammar in the following way: An explanation on the blackboard is given pertaining to the grammar rule. For example, 'definitive article' and pupils take it down in their exercise books. They are then given an exercise to test if they have understood the lesson.

### 3.5 CRITIQUE OF 'MODERN ARABIC READER' Std. 2:

The 'Modern Arabic Reader' for standard two has been compiled by S I A Razzack. In the words of the compiler, the aim of the book is to enable a child to 'read' Arabic, identify words, construct simple sentences and write from memory.

He points out in the introduction of the book that Arabic is the language of the *Qur'an*. Much attention therefore should be given to proper pronunciation and correct reading.

The following is a critique of some of the lessons

contained in the book.

The writing exercise in the first lesson does not provide adequate space for the pupil to practice writing. Initially, pupils should be allowed to form large letters and at a later stage reduce the size. Another shortcoming of the book is that it contains no pictures or drawings to illustrate the meaning of words. In the lessons, words such as `yad' and `waj' which mean hand and face respectively are used which can best be learnt by the pupil if pictures were used. It stands to reason that in order to explain the meaning of the word the English translation will be used.

In the lesson it is pointed out how a word is formed from the individual letters. The words are broken up into its individual letters as the following example illustrates.



It should be borne in mind that pupils are eight or nine years old and in standard two. They are capable of copying words from the blackboard without having to point out how the letters look on their own. Confusion may arise in the mind of the pupil when the shape of the letter on its own is taught.

In lesson eleven the personal pronouns are taught. What I need to point out about this lesson is that in the sentences the personal pronouns are used with the verb. When speaking the Arabic language the personal pronoun is not used because it is understood to be contained in the verb. The following example will clarify this point. The sentence which means `He

wrote a story' has the personal pronoun 'he' هو included. The verb كتب `kataba' includes the personal pronoun and means 'He wrote'. If the intention of the author was to highlight the personal pronouns then it should have been restricted to the examples only and excluded from the sentences in the reading exercise.

The book 'Modern Arabic Reader' does not adequately fulfil the requirements of the syllabus. In the circular of 1990, no. 42 it states under the heading 'oral communication' that "oral work shall include conversation, talks and reading". The book does not have any conversational passages neither reading (stories) passages. Under paragraph 2.3.3.2 in the above mentioned circular it states that writing "will be based on language use, constructing simple sentences in Arabic and writing short paragraphs". The book does not allow space for the pupil to construct or write simple sentences, neither does it provide space for the writing of short paragraphs.

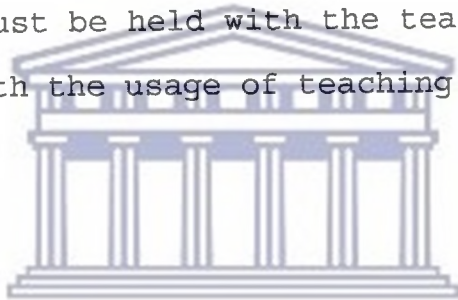
### 3.6 SUMMARY

The aims and objectives within the syllabus is what we need to strive for. Teachers of Arabic are restricted by the syllabus from introducing novel techniques and alternative approaches to the teaching of Arabic.

In this connection the content of the syllabus (E. C Circular No. 42 of 1990) of the House of Delegates should be revised and appropriate Arabic readers and textbooks, should be compiled to complement the syllabus.

Another factor to take into consideration is the lack of time. The teachers see the pupils thrice a week which, if calculated, makes up one and a half hours for the week. Only one period (half an hour) for the week may be dedicated to 'reading with comprehension' because there are other aspects of the syllabus that need to be covered.

The teacher must be supplied with teaching aides in the form of charts, pictures and other related teaching material which are likely to improve the teaching of the subject. In order to achieve the aims of the syllabus regular workshops must be held with the teachers to familiarize them with the usage of teaching aides, textbooks and readers.



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## CHAPTER FOUR

### THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

#### 4.1 Readings supporting the classroom activities

These are some further readings which are relevant to the teaching of Arabic Reading Comprehension as well as to stimulate an interest in my classroom teaching.

The need for a child to learn a language is of importance because of the necessity to communicate. Children learn to associate a word to a particular object which they are playing with. The word to the object is taught to the young child by an adult or another young child. In the article 'Words and the Imagination', Britton (1982) writes that it is experience the child is groping for and seeking to interpret. The child develops its imaginary skills by handling an object, feeling its weight, size, edibility by placing it in its mouth, then through the medium of language. Britton (1982) writes that for every item in the human child's environment there exists side by side with it, a verbal counterpart, and much of his parents' energy is given to the manipulation not of the things but of the words. A young child is exposed to the conversation of the people around him, and this cannot be ignored by the child. Children start to imitate the sound they hear by babbling and later learn to speak.

Parents and pupils do not communicate in the Arabic language at home, but it is possible to create a 'communicative' environment in the classroom where Arabic can be used by pupils to facilitate their acquisition of the language. A conducive environment can be established in class

by having picture charts with Arabic words and sentences. The charts must be attractive to the pupils so that when they focus on them, they will start a discussion around the pictures or sentences on the charts. One aspect of the Communicative Approach is to get pupils to communicate with the rest of the class what they see on the charts. Sections of the walls in the classroom can be used to paste charts which focuses on topics or themes which are related to the course work. As a further strategy to facilitate the Communicative Approach worksheets can be administered to the pupils wherein exercises such as 'Fill in the blank spaces', 'Choose the correct answer', 'Rearrange the following sentences' and 'Write a short paragraph on the picture provided' may be completed. Exercises like the above will require the pupils to either work individually or in groups. Group work should be encouraged at this stage so that pupils can help each other by providing a word, help with the sentence structure or just talking about the work.

Flood (1981 : 38 - 40) defines reading as complex mental processes that a reader uses when interacting meaningfully with printed discourse. He qualifies the meaning of words within his definition such as 'complex', 'mental', 'discourse', 'interacts' and 'meaningful' by writing:

a) Reading is a mental activity which occurs in the mind.

The result of the act of reading is seen in the form of word recognition, answering questions and using new ideas.

b) Reading occurs when the reader interacts with discourse

(i.e making meaning and interpreting what is read) by contributing to the reading act; and

c) Reading is meaningful through the exchange of meaning.

Hittleman (1978) defines reading as a verbal process which is interrelated with thinking as well as all the other communicative abilities such as listening, speaking and writing. Reading is a process of reconstructing from the printed patterns on the page the ideas and information intended by the author.

As a novice beginner in the implementation of the Communicative Approach some of the exercises above do not fall within the ambit of the approach under discussion. However, pupils enquire, discuss and ask questions relating to the story or lesson. Since the writing exercises stimulate communication and pupils become absorbed or attracted by it, it does in my opinion facilitate the Communicative and meaning making approach.

Other approaches to facilitate the Communicative Approach would be for pupils to read from the Arabic storybooks available in class. The reading can be done collectively and thereafter individual pupils can be asked to read. The teacher will ask questions pertaining to the story to elicit their ideas about the story. Pupils can either be asked to answer the questions or write them down as part of an exercise.

Pupils should be given the scope to act out various scenes from a story. Through acting they communicate with each other and this helps them to understand the story as well as

facilitate their acquisition of the Arabic language.

In my teaching experience up to now, I found pupils enjoyed singing Arabic songs and listening to and reading poetry. The reason in my opinion is due to the tune and the rhyming of the words. They became absorbed in the singing through body movements by using the hands, feet or physical gestures.

Squire is of the opinion that thinking is involved in the construction of sentences. In his article 'Composing and Comprehending', Britton (1970) is quoted as saying that "it is through language that children learn to label ideas, to clarify, to relate the new to the known, to construct ideas or compose, to reconstruct or comprehend." (Squire 1984:25). For the above to take place the process of thought is involved. Thus, a learner is actively involved in engaging in the construction of meaning, developing ideas, relating ideas and expressing it. Squire (1984) recommends an approach to teaching comprehension which he found to be helpful. To teach the comprehension of a text pupils should be allowed to summarize, retell, rephrase and act out.

The Communicative Approach is not restrictive to one or two activities, but in fact comprises a wide range of teaching activities for the facilitation of acquiring proficiency in the language.

In the article 'The Speaker', Britton (1982) writes that whenever we go back, in mind or in talk, over past experiences, to understand them better or to accept them more fully or simply to enjoy them again, we are as it were in the



role of spectators of our own lives. For this end, I placed my students in the position of spectators of their own lives when I provided them with the Arabic version of the stories 'Red Riding Hood' and 'The Lion and the Mouse'. In my class they were given the chance to once again enjoy and become absorbed by the reading of the stories in Arabic. The pupils were taken back in time and were allowed to, as Britton (1982) puts it to 'savour' the past events in a quite different way. As 'spectators' they 'stopped the world' in order to 'get off'. The pupils were left free to respond to the forms of the language, words and pictures which is an integral part of the total construction. Pupils were allowed to ask questions related to the story. This encouraged pupils to answer and also discuss words and ideas in the story. The activities made it possible for the pupils to not only be actively involved in the story, but most importantly to enjoy it.

According to Mikhail Bakhtin 'carnivals and popular festivals' were important occasions for social meetings and exchanges during the Middle Ages. (Lensmire 1994 : 373). The concept of the carnival can be used to create an atmosphere of learning and positive exchange in the classroom.

Bakhtin (1994) is of the opinion that there should be "participation by all." (Ibid). In an attempt to get pupils to participate in a particular activity the teacher must ensure that the pupils understand what is required from the activity. A second feature of Bakhtin's idea of the 'carnival' is that there should be "free and familiar contact amongst people". (Ibid). In the classroom pupils would feel more

comfortable in speaking or relating their experiences to those whom they associate with frequently. Pupils should be allowed to move physically around in the classroom rather than being restricted from doing so. Pupils should be given the scope to act, sing and say poetry in class.

Rouse (1978) in the book, *'The Completed Gesture'* expounds another idea for involving pupils with the story. What is suggested is that pupils become involved by making certain sounds such as a roaring lion, squeaking mouse, wind blowing when the story is related by the teacher. This would lead to the "imaginative experience" of the child and "draws on emotions which is important for later development" (Rouse 1978 : 68).

In the article 'Reading like a Reader', Frank Smith (1984) outlines two important functions a teacher has in guiding children towards understanding literature. The first is to demonstrate the use for writing and secondly to help children use writing themselves. Smith (1984) talks of a situation where young writers join the club of writers. In the same way as teachers help children to read so should teachers help pupils to write in order to join the club of writers. A situation must prevail as Smith points out where the teacher helps the pupils wherein they perceive themselves as readers and writers before they are able to read and write for themselves.

Within the club both the teacher and club are involved in producing a story. There is a process of collaboration wherein if the teacher provides the right cues can unravel the

ideas within the child's mind. Pursuing the idea of pupils writing their own little stories Graves and Hansen (1984) found that children 'play' their way into understanding what reading and writing is about. They found that pupils provide their own rendition of a story and make it their own.

Smith (1984) has a precondition to inviting pupils to the club. He is of the opinion that teachers must first belong to the club before inviting their pupils. As an Arabic teacher I belong to the club of speakers and writers of Arabic in the world. At present, however, I occupy myself with the reading of Arabic texts in order to keep in touch with the language. Amongst my colleagues at school I don't have the opportunity to speak to them due to lack of time, as well as our infrequent meetings. Teachers must also be made to understand the importance of belonging to the club and the possibilities which can be explored. Through avoiding evaluation of pupils' work it is possible to get pupils to write stories to be read, books to be published, poems to be read, songs to be sung and plays to be acted out. In the writing of the story 'The Lion and the Mouse' I made it clear to the pupils that I was not interested in checking their spelling. Rather, I was more interested to ascertain how much they remembered or recalled of the story. The way in which the pupils wrote the story was acceptable to me because it showed that they were readers and writers of Arabic. This was also an opportunity for the pupils to become part of the club of writers.

Reading does influence writing. Eckhoff (1984) found that Basal readers impact on what children write due to the

time spent with these readers. She found that when reading texts were oversimplified they impacted on their reading. Stotsky quotes Loban (1963) regarding the relationship between reading and writing abilities and says that those who read well also write well, those who read poorly also write poorly. In my attempt to teach Reading Comprehension I exposed pupils to the translated stories alluded to earlier - 'Red Riding Hood' and 'The Lion and the Mouse'.

The vocabulary in these stories were unfamiliar to them because it was in Arabic, yet they were able to acquire an understanding of it. From the version of the story written by the pupils I can argue that there is no need to oversimplify the vocabulary in the stories, because of fears that the children will not comprehend and follow the story line. This author is of the conviction that reading stories do assist pupils to learn to write and express themselves.

From the above discussion it is evident that teachers need to teach meaningful chunks of discourse rather than individual letters and words. Teachers should allow pupils to take on the role of spectators of their own lives. Further, teachers need to collaborate with the pupils in order to help them compose their own stories. However, a precondition is that the teacher must belong to the club of writers before inviting pupils to it.

In the following chapter activities to facilitate Reading Comprehension are outlined.

## CHAPTER 5

### READING AND WRITING FOR MEANING

#### 5.1 STICK FIGURE DRAWINGS

In an attempt to get pupils to communicate, stimulate their interest and to make sentences meaningful to them, I proceeded with the lesson by drawing the stick figure of a boy in a sitting position on a chair. At this stage pupils could pronounce and recognise the two objects in the picture - `Kursi' and `Walad'. I proceeded to make the action of sitting and pointed to the boy (stick figure) and said `yaj lisul - waladu alal - kursi. (The boy is sitting on the chair). I performed the sitting action and repeated the sentence three times so that pupils could familiarize themselves with its pronunciation. The physical action grasped the attention of the pupils in that they saw what I did and some of them repeated the same action. The pupils became involved in the sense that as the sentence was read they would do the actions that accompanied it.

The reason for adopting the above technique rather than stories at this stage was not to overwhelm pupils with the amount of written text in a story. I decided to progressively take them from understanding a meaningful sentence and thereafter introduce them to the text of the story.

The next step was to introduce pupils to the written form of the word accompanied by the picture, drawing or action. I found that pupils at this stage were able to associate the written form of the word to an object when it appeared in a sentence. I proceeded by writing the following

two words *`Kursi* and *Walad'* beneath the pictures. After pronouncing the words, pupils had no difficulty in repeating them because by that time they knew the pronunciation. I wrote the complete sentence *`yaj lisul - waladu alal - kursi'* on the board with the pictures of the boy and chair above the Arabic words. I repeated the sentence and thereafter erased the two pictures. Pupils were able to read the entire sentence without hesitation.

Reflecting on these lessons I remember how during the presentation of the above lesson pupils giggled and commented on the stick figure drawings. They wanted me to add more *`body'* to it. I explained to them that I am not an artist. They also accepted my explanation that we only have a half an hour period and therefore I could not spend unnecessary time perfecting my drawings. On occasions the pupils were raising their voices when repeating the words and sentences to the extent where they were disturbing the classroom next door. The impression I got from this was that they enjoyed repeating the words and sentences which had meaning for them. At the end of the period some pupils asked me to continue with this type of presentation because they liked to draw and write more words. Regarding the writing exercise above, pupils would come up to me after writing a word or two and enquire if they wrote it the way it is on the board. I would make comments such as "very neat", "Keep it up", "Perfect" or "Write it like this". I noticed that pupils regarded the above mentioned comments as a sense of achievement.

Two days after I taught the lesson, (*yaj lisul - waladu alal - kursi*) I asked a pupil to come to the board and write down the sentence she took down in her book. I read out the sentence and although the pupil tried to write, she was not able to get the correct spelling of the words. I suppose the pupil was placed in a situation where she either had to get the correct spelling of the words or face the ridicule and comments of the other pupils in the class. When the other pupils saw that she could not write the sentence they checked their books to see how it was written. Perhaps before I asked the pupil to write the sentence on the board I should have asked everybody to check how the sentence was written in their books and then I should have asked for volunteers. This would have allowed them to familiarize themselves with the spelling of the words. When pupils are asked to write and copy words from the board it forces them to pay attention to the details in words, to similarities and differences, peculiarities and unusual features.

Adrian Doff (1992) suggests that the teacher write a word on the blackboard and pupils be taught how to read it, thereafter it will be erased. The pupils will then be asked to write out the word. This exercise is to let pupils develop the idea that they need to know or learn a word in its totality and not as a series of letters.

As children write and spell, they can see the need for matching letters to sound. When a word is written from memory the children think of the succession of sounds within words, call up a visual impression of the word parts, which are all

valuable aids in reading. In Arabic each letter has a distinct sound unlike some words in the English language. In English we have the word 'knife' in which the letter 'k' is silent when pronounced, whereas in Arabic this never occurs.

## 5.2 STORIES

I pondered about the options I had in attempting to encourage and motivate pupils to read Arabic texts with comprehension. Before making the final decision I had to take into consideration those pupils who were not reciting from the Qur'an. I was cautious in that whatever approach I was to adopt I did not want these pupils to become isolated from those pupils who were reciting the Qur'an. My final decision was influenced by my attendance of lectures, group discussions, reading of books and articles during my course of study. I decided to introduce translated English stories to the pupils in an attempt to develop Reading Comprehension.

I translated 'Little Red Riding Hood' and 'The Lion and the Mouse' for the following reasons:

I am of the opinion that the language in storybooks is rich in terms of its descriptive vocabulary. The sentences are more complex than the ordinary speech children use in their daily conversations. In an attempt to encourage the comprehension of vocabulary, Meyer (1994) is of the opinion that exposing pupils to storybooks will encourage the acquiring of new word meanings. In this regard I asked pupils which story they would like me to translate into Arabic so that we could read it in class the next time we met. The pupils asked me to translate



'Little Red Riding Hood', which I did. I, however, gave the translated story a new title, 'Sameera' which means a woman partner who entertains with lively conversation. I chose the name 'Sameera' because I personally like it. Besides being a personal favourite of mine no female pupil in my class had that name. If I had used one of my pupils' name they would have probably accused me of favouritism. It was, however, not possible for me to come up with a literal translation of the original title.

In the opinion of this author, stories are interesting to read because they become captivating as the events unfold. A story leads a reader to predict what is about to happen next. The reader can also become absorbed by certain words, actions, movements and sounds which evoke certain emotions within the reader. Last, but not least, stories have a story line and plot wherein the sequence flow from one event to the other.

In my search for the above mentioned storybook, I came across another book titled, 'The Lion and the Mouse'. At this stage I did not realise that this was a favourite amongst pupils. The pictures were colourful and after reading the story I decided to translate it into Arabic because the sentences were easily translatable.

Sipe (1993) through his research found that young students loved to revisit and reexperience favourite stories from their early childhood. In his narration of stories he would deliberately 'transform' these stories from its original. What he did in the story of 'Goldilocks and the

'Three Bears' was to narrate it in rap style and adding words such as 'yeh man', 'hey dude' in his narration. I would assume that my pupils would have thought about the first time they heard or read about 'Red Riding Hood' and 'The Lion and the Mouse' although I did not enquire from them when first they came across these stories. Sipe's rationale was to develop a literary insight and to allow pupils to reexperience the fascination of traditional stories, while also enjoying the humour and creativity in the transformations.

Pinnel (1980) suggests some other activities in 'Developing the awareness of book language' by reading a story to a child and then asking the child to relate the story while looking at the pictures and writing. By doing this the teacher can gather how many words pupils are able to recognise and read. It gives pupils the chance to relate the story line and ideas of the story. Pupils can also develop the ability to relate their own interpretation of the pictures and make predictions in the story.

Meyer et al (1994) quote experimental research activity conducted by Feitelson which focused on teachers' reading stories aloud to students. They found that activities such as letter sound practice and word reading activities led to achievement in reading when such activities were directly related to the reading process.

Abramovici (1990) further argues that of the many studies undertaken it was shown that when pupils listen to stories they show a better understanding of the main ideas. On the other hand, if pupils were left with the task of

reading a story they tended to have difficulty in extracting the main ideas.

Koskinen (1994) in her research found that pupils are better motivated to read a story with which they are familiar or which was read to them by their parents or teachers or which they themselves read previously, or saw on television or in cinemas. Pederson (1995) is of the opinion that story telling brings to the listener a heightened awareness, a sense of wonder, of mystery and a reverence for life.

### 5.3 THE LESSON

The technique which is outlined below dawned upon me when I realised that pupils were not immediately able to relate or do a written summary of the story in Arabic.

I instructed the pupils to put away all texts and to focus their attention on the board on which I secured the enlarged pictures. I pointed to the lion and asked the pupils what it was. My question was posed in Arabic, but they answered in English by saying it was a lion. I asked them for the Arabic word, and eventually a pupil gave the correct answer. I then pointed to the mouse and once again the above procedure was repeated. I pointed to the tree and nobody could get to the word. I eventually told them what it was. I pronounced the Arabic words with clarity for the benefit of the pupils because they came across it for the first time. I swept my hand over the background in the picture and gave them the word which describes a jungle.

I revised the words collectively with them by pointing

to the different objects in the picture. I then asked individual pupils to tell me what I was pointing to. If they hesitated or did not know, I would then, in Arabic, ask another pupil and then come back to the previous pupil to provide the word for the object I was pointing to.

When I felt satisfied that pupils knew the four words - *`al - asad'* (the lion), *`al - fa'r'* (the mouse), *`al - shajara'* (the tree), *`al - ghaba'* (the jungle), I then formulated short phrases and sentences by pointing to the objects in the picture.



I pointed to the lion and said: "*Hadha asad*", (This is a lion), which the pupils repeated several times. I then pointed to the mouse and said: "*Hadha fa'r*", (This is a mouse), which the pupils also repeated several times. I made the action of sitting and pointed to the lion and tree respectively as I

said the sentence which was, "yajlisul - asad tahta - shajara", (The lion is sitting beneath the tree). I then pointed to the tree and said `ashajara' (The tree) and while sweeping my hand over the background of the picture added `fil - ghaba', (...is in the jungle). These sentences were then repeated by the pupils whilst I pointed to the objects in the picture. After a while pupils were able to say it on their own with confidence and what they said had meaning for them.



With the second picture, as I pointed to the lion and mouse respectively, pupils gave me the Arabic words, namely, `al - *asad*' and `al - *fa'r*'. I would point to either the lion or the mouse as I uttered the sentences. I pointed to the lion and using facial and physical gestures, said: *Qalal - asad lil - fa'r*: "*Sa aquluka*", (The lion said to the mouse: "I will eat you"). I then pointed to the mouse and using facial and physical gestures, said: *Qalal - fa'r*: "*La ta' kuluni. Utrukni, Utrukni*", (The mouse said: "Do not eat me. Leave me, leave me).



I used the above two pictures simultaneously to conclude the story. I pointed to the lion in picture three and used facial expressions and said: "*Yasrahul - asad lil - khawanat*", (The lion called out to the animals). Pupils repeated the sentence and used facial expressions to show how the lion called out with its mouth wide open. I pointed to the animals in the picture and pointed out to the pupils that they ran away, saying: "*Yahrubul - khawanat*", (The animals ran away). They then repeated the sentences referring to picture three. When I was satisfied that they could say it fluently after asking individual pupils, I then moved on to the fourth picture. I pointed to the mouse and using facial expressions once again to express how the mouse ate or nibbled on the rope said: "*Ya'kulul - fa'r al - habl. Asbahal - asad mutaharir*", (The mouse ate on the rope. The lion was free at last).

It took me an hour to complete the first two pictures with the sentences. I made the necessary arrangements with the other teacher to utilize his teaching period so that I could conduct the above lesson. Pictures three and four took me half an hour to complete.

In an attempt to allow pupils to express their 'imaginative experience' regarding the acting out of the story 'The Lion and the Mouse' I asked the pupils to volunteer to act. Some pupils were receptive to the idea whilst others were shy. Somebody asked me if they had to say the lines in Arabic to which I replied in the affirmative. A lot of movement was taking place amongst the pupils. They were encouraging each other to take a particular role. Eventually, the tallest, most

talkative and sometimes disruptive boy in class volunteered to be the lion. It was quite interesting to note that none of the other pupils objected to him taking the leading role. In class this boy asserts himself and dominates the other boys. The shortest boy then volunteered to be the mouse. I thought that he will suit the character of the mouse because of his squeaky voice and small physique. I then asked for volunteers to act as trees. The girls responded overwhelmingly, but I only needed four of them to sway from side to side indicating that there was a breeze. As for the other animals such as the giraffe, aardvark, tiger, elephant and zebra both the girls and boys participated in playing these roles. Some pupils occupied the desks in the front row and were sitting two on a seat eagerly waiting for the acting to begin. Pupils left their seats and I would have fought a losing battle trying to get them to return to their seats. I got the impression that the pupils wanted to see what was going to take place in front of them. I briefly outlined to the pupils what was expected of them and whilst I was speaking, one or two pupils practised the roaring and squeaking sounds made by a lion and mouse respectively. I gave up my attempt requesting silence from the pupils because of the constant movement in the front and at the same time trying to explain to the actors what was required of them. In an attempt to involve the rest of the pupils and also maintaining some silence and discipline I asked them to be the narrators of the story in Arabic. When all was set the actors asked me what they were expected to say and do. I outlined to them the sequence of events and also the



lines they had to say. They repeated their lines a few times, but inevitably when it came to their turn to speak they would fumble, which was probably due to the excitement.

According to Perl (1994), stories have mythic powers in that there exists connections between the text we read and the lives we live, between composing our stories and composing ourselves. When pupils are given the opportunity to compose a story they in effect express their feelings on paper and even relate events the way they perceive them to be. The scene where the lion was trapped and called out for help to the other animals created a furore in the class. The boys acting as the animals took advantage of the situation by approaching the trapped 'lion' and poking it with their fingers and sometimes kicking it. The boy (lion) got up to hit them, but I had to come to their rescue by pacifying him. I told him that he was not supposed to get up because he was caught in the trap. I then cautioned the other boys and told them that the 'lion' would take his revenge during break time and I will not be around to help them. After a few rehearsals and coaching they managed to act out the various scenes of the story. I sensed a feeling of achievement and success on the part of the pupils because this was the first time they ever acted speaking in the Arabic language.

#### 5.4 FROM READING TO WRITING

Britton (1963) quotes Vygotsky's views with regard to learning to read and write. He says that these processes must be seen as inseparable aspects of one process. He goes on to say that

other forms of symbolic behaviour, such as gestures, make believe play and pictorial representation most certainly contribute to the reading and writing acquisition. Pupils intending to master a written language will involve themselves in such activities.

With regard to the process of reading and writing being an inseparable aspect of one process Post (1989) on the other hand differs with the above point by arguing that the only means in achieving fluent reading and comprehension is to separate the subskills of reading comprehension. However, at a later stage these separate subskills he believes should be fused together into an integrated and holistic reading comprehension activity.

On the other hand, I am of the opinion that all language skills are related, therefore the writing process must accompany the reading process. "Reading and writing are both forms of language expressed with a common graphic symbol system representing the spoken language" (Hildreth 1964: 155). The reading process thus becomes reinforced when writing skills are taught simultaneously. The difference between reading and writing is that in reading words are identified to give meaning whilst in writing the pupil has to think of the letters or symbols that represent the sounds of the words that is to be written.

Some teachers hold the view that pupils should be taught writing as soon as they have "learnt to read the words they are required to write and spell" (Hildreth 1964: 156).

The same teachers are of the opinion that if writing is taught before the pupil can read then this will interfere with the whole - word recognition process of teaching reading. When the two processes, reading and writing, are taught separately, based on Posts' idea, then inevitably the reading process is pushed ahead far beyond the writing process which means that the two skills cannot be mutually reinforcing.

Britton (1963) finds common ground between what pupils write in school and the literature they read. The pupils at Cravenby Secondary School were familiar with the stories I presented to them. The fact that they knew the story line in English most certainly helped them follow the Arabic version of the story.

The idea of the 'Breakthrough to literacy' approach' of developing pupils to express themselves in the writing of sentences is to use words which they have become familiar with. Pupils should be provided with pieces of cardboard on which individual words are written which are based on the stories they have read. Pupils should then formulate sentences. Thereafter, they should write the sentences in their books which will form part of the writing exercise.

Bensoussan and Kreindler (1990) conducted a research study in which six classes were required to summarize texts of general interest whilst another three classes answered short questions on the same texts. The results of this study indicated that writing summaries helped students to read more efficiently. The summarizing of texts entail distinguishing between main and subordinate ideas, drawing inferences and

making judgements.

I gave pupils an exercise in which they had to answer questions based on the story `al - asad wal - fa'r'. Pupils experienced problems in answering the questions because they did not understand the Arabic instructions, because of certain words in the sentences which they came across for the first time and also some pupils could not pronounce the words. A possible explanation for this is that at *madrassa* pupils learn to recognise and pronounce Arabic words which have the diacritical marks on them which assists them in deciding on the sound of the letter. In the exercise I gave them, there were no diacritical marks on the words, so perhaps this interfered with their recognition ability. I had to assist many pupils with the reading of the questions and also providing the meaning of words before they could answer the questions.

Britton (1984) writes that as a child extends his reading so does he internalize more and more the patterns of the written language. What was of interest was that the pupils wrote the sentences in the story the way they were read to or read it for themselves. As Britton (1984) puts it, he is using the storyteller's language as he had got it from the printed page by somebody's reading. With the continuous repetition pupils partly memorized the words or sentences and this helped them to recall the words and sentences.

I instructed the standard two pupils to write in Arabic the story `al - asad - wal - fa'r' from memory. They memorized the story and I wanted to check to what extent they were able

to write it correctly. The pupils were only exposed to the words when I read the story from the book which I translated. When I used the pictures to simplify the story I did not write the sentences or words on the board, but did it orally.

Pupils wrote the English version, others wrote words from the story and some were able to write sentences even though each word was spelt wrong.

The following is a sample of a std. 2 pupil, Muneera Pathan who wrote the story in English and then in Arabic. The English version gave me an indication that she was able to speak and write relatively fluently except for a few spelling errors. In her Arabic version of the story she was only able to write words rather than the sentences. She knew the story from memory and I asked her why she did not write the sentences. She replied that she could not spell the words and therefore did not write the sentences. The English version of the story which she wrote was based on what she understood and memorized of the Arabic story.

After I collected the pages, I then called individual pupils and asked them to tell me what they wrote. They would read the words the way it ought to be pronounced, but failed to write the word with its correct spelling. I have included the correct spelling of the words and sentences beneath each writing lesson.

As I indicated earlier, I did not teach or show pupils how to write the words, yet, they were to a certain extent able to write words and sentences as they saw fit.

From amongst all the words written by Muneera Pathan, 'yajlisu' was the only word in line four which she spelt and wrote correctly. The word 'asad' was spelt correctly, but was not joined correctly. Muneera wrote words rather than sentences about the story. I would infer that the individual words written convey more meaning to the pupil. In line two the words are scratched out yet it is spelt correct. She wrote 'This is a lion', but it does not follow the sequence of the story therefore I assume she thought it to be inappropriate. On the following page are the sentences the way it ought to have been written.

Muneera Pathan  
قُونِ



وَدُرْكَانِ  
~~هَذَا اسد~~  
قَدِ اسد  
قَدِ نَادِ

يَجْلِسُ  
~~بِالْأَسَدِ~~  
يَجْلِسُ رَجُلٌ  
صَدَقَتْ خَبْرَتُهُ

منيرة



UNIVERSITY <sup>غاب</sup> of the  
WESTERN CAPE

اتركني

قال الأسد

قال الفأر

يجلس

يصرخ

متحرر

Hanief Parker is another student who managed to write a few sentences in his own words and spelling it his way. He was able to recall a few sentences from memory and familiarised himself with the idea that Arabic is written from right to left. Although the joining of the letters was not done in most instances the writing, however, indicates that he learnt to recall the sound of the word rather than its written shape. Below is a writing sample of the sentences and on the following page the sentences the way it ought to have been spelt and written.



لَعَلَّ أَهْلَ سِدِّ لَعَلَّ فَهَدُ  
 بِبَلِيْسْ أَهْلَ سِدِّ سَمِيْنَا  
 نَدْرُ شَيْءٍ فَلَ شَيْءٍ بَا، فَلَا أَهْلَ سِدِّ  
 فَهَدُ دَرْدِيْنِ فَهَدُ دَرْدِيْنِ



هنف

هذا أسد هذا فأر

يجلس أسد تحت

شجرة في غابة قال أسد

كلني

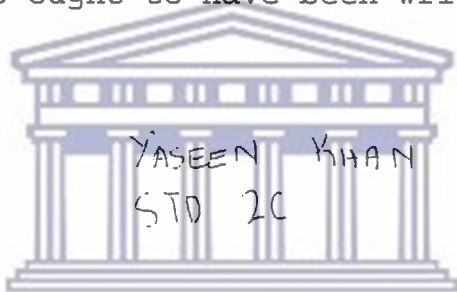
ساكلك قال فأر تحت



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أتركني

Yaseen Khan was able to virtually write the entire story the way he was taught except for the wrong spelling of the words. A few words were erased by him and it is not clear what he tried to write. The hand writing is not steady, yet he was able to read to me what he wrote. In certain words the incorrect letter is written, but when read sounds correct. For example, in the word *utrunki* it is spelt with a *Qaf* instead of a *Kaf*. These two letters have different shapes, but sound very similar to each other. The following page contains the sentences the way it ought to have been written.



YASEEN KHAN  
STD 2C

كاش

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 قولا أسد لادى و شك  
 لا تزدب الصدق قاتب اتو قاتب

~~قولا أسد لادى و شك  
 لا تزدب الصدق قاتب اتو قاتب~~

قولا أسد لادى و شك  
 لا تزدب الصدق قاتب اتو قاتب

~~قولا أسد لادى و شك~~

أسد لادى و شك  
 قولا أسد لادى و شك

هذا أسد هذا فأر يجلس أسد تحت شجرة  
قال أسد لفأر

يصرخ أسد تحت للحيوانات

لا تأكلني اتركني اتركني

اصبح أسد متحرر

قال أسد للحيوانات  
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In retrospect, I hope that I have encouraged pupils to continue pursuing the study of the Arabic language. Learning Arabic can be fun, exciting and easy to learn. I am optimistic that the Communicative Approach to teaching Arabic has given pupils all the more reason to pursue the Arabic language up to High School level. Perhaps, it can be argued that the success of this approach will not be seen to bear any fruits at this stage, but I am optimistic that it will in the near future.



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## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study experimented with the Communicative Approach to introduce meaningful language material to develop Reading Comprehension at the Primary School level. First, the study was prefaced by an overview of the career opportunities available for pursuing the study of Arabic. Second, it outlines the teaching of Arabic at the *madrassa*. Third, it critiques the Arabic syllabus, textbook and teaching approaches of Arabic at Cravenby Secondary School. Fourth, a literature overview of relevant reading material was provided. Fifth, the approach implemented to achieve the aim of the research ? This chapter summarises and concludes the study, and also raises issues for further research and practical considerations.

Since the Arabic language is recognised by the South African Constitution, (act 200 Of 1993), more consideration must be given towards the promotion of the language at School level. In this way, more jobs will be created in the job market.

With regard to Arabic at the *madrassa* it was pointed out that the translation method is used whereby the pupil is given a list of words in Arabic and English.

The lack of appropriate textbooks which are in conformity with the syllabus, lack of sufficient Arabic teaching periods, the current teaching pedagogies adopted by teachers, their inability to converse fluently in the

Arabic language and the lack of knowledge of the Communicative Approach are all factors which contribute to the negative attitude developed by pupils.

The literature review tried to point out some of the Communicative techniques available to teaching a language, but an understanding of the situation and a needs analysis must first be conducted.

The approach implemented in class indicated that pupils were eager to learn the language and at the same time learn aspects of the language. Translated stories were taught to the pupils which were read to them and they also had to read these. The meaning of sentences and words were explained through actions, pictures, drawings and English translation of certain words or phrases. Pupils also wrote the story in Arabic. They were asked to write any word or sentence that came to mind, irrespective of the spelling. There is evidence that pupils have accomplished the ability to put down in writing their own meaning, understanding and interpretation of the story which was taught to them. The pupils were also given the opportunity to act out the various scenes of the story titled "The Lion and the Mouse".

#### 6.1 Considerations for Future Research

Future research will have to focus on drawing up a syllabus that will serve the needs of the community and learner. Textbooks such as readers which will facilitate the writing process must be produced in order to achieve the objectives of the syllabus.

Teacher training and workshops must be held regularly by the Education Department. Teachers will have to be familiarized with the new textbooks and their proper usage. Teacher confidence with regard to Arabic language fluency and the teaching of the language must also be looked into.

Arabic as a language should be promoted at many schools as possible. With the influx of Middle East businessmen, tourists and embassies, the ability to speak the Arabic language will be an advantage. In the process many job opportunities will become available such as translators, interpreters, authors and tourist guides.

## 6.2 Epilogue

This study examined issues related to the teaching of Arabic at *madrassa* in general, and primary school in particular. This author is of the conviction that a teaching approach different from the current one which is adopted at *madrassa* and School should be instituted. It is also this conviction which has prompted the study. Education authorities should seriously consider implementing and introducing the "Communicative Approach" with the focus on Reading Comprehension.

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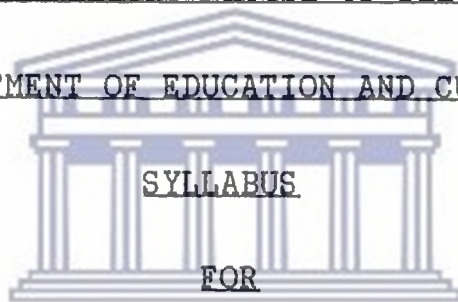
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(Arabic)

ADMINISTRATION : HOUSE OF DELEGATES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE



SYLLABUS

FOR

UNIVERSITY *of the*  
ARABIC  
WESTERN CAPE

STANDARDS 2, 3, 4 AND 5

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 1991

REFERENCE: E.C. CIRCULAR NO. 42 OF 1990



## SYLLABUS FOR ARABIC

### STANDARDS 2, 3, 4 AND 5

#### 1. AIMS

- 1.1 To create in pupils a love for the Arabic language.
- 1.2 To teach pupils to express themselves correctly and clearly in spoken and written Arabic, and to enable them to use Arabic with increasing ability and confidence.
- 1.3 To introduce pupils to correct Arabic use, and to help them develop the necessary language skills which would contribute to effective learning, expression and communication.
- 1.4 To teach pupils to read fluently and with understanding.

#### 2. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE SYLLABUS

- 2.1 This syllabus spans standards 2 to 5. For convenience and clarity the syllabus content for each standard is presented in three sections, viz. Oral Communication, Language Study and Written Communication. However, it must be stressed that language competence grows through an interaction of listening, reading, talking, writing and experience. In practice the three sections should wherever possible be integrated and the subject should be treated as a whole.
- 2.2 Taking the above into account, the periods allocated to Arabic should be used in a flexible manner, provided that all three sections of the work receive regular attention.
- 2.3 The following are general comments on each section of the syllabus:

##### 2.3.1 ORAL COMMUNICATION

- 2.3.1.1 Since the most effective way to learn a language is through conversation and listening, it is of the utmost importance that oral work and exercises become part and parcel of the language learning process. In this way the pupils' ears will become attuned to the correct forms and they will develop a feeling for the language. The teacher's own speech and pronunciation will serve as a model.
- 2.3.1.2 Oral work shall include conversation, talks and reading.
- 2.3.1.3 Emphasis must be given to correct and accurate accent and pronunciation.
- 2.3.1.4 Full use should be made of indoor and outdoor audio-visual resources (slides, tapes, pictorial charts).

arabic/sit

## 2.3.2 LANGUAGE STUDY

- 2.3.2.1 To learn a language, it is important that pupils are familiar with the basics of its grammar.
- 2.3.2.2. In this way, they will learn the correct use and structures of the language. The teacher must make lessons interesting via oral and written exercises.

## 2.3.3 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- 2.3.3.1 Written work in Arabic should aim at consolidating the pupils' language competence.
- 2.3.3.2 The work will be based on language use, constructing simple sentences in Arabic and writing short paragraphs.
- 2.3.3.3. It is important that careful attention be paid to clear handwriting and correct spelling.



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SYLLABUS CONTENT

ELABORATION

1. ORAL COMMUNICATION

1.1 Conversation

simple conversation;  
greetings; dialogues.

1.2 Reading

reading aloud; silent  
reading; model reading by  
teacher from sources such as  
the Quran and the Ahadith.  
(N.B. Pupils are not expected  
translations)

1.3 Talks

prepared talks on simple  
topics.

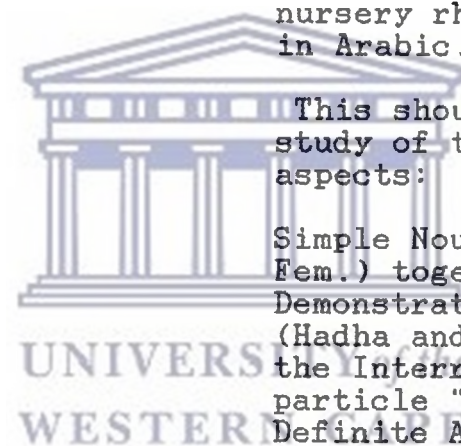
1.4 Songs/Poems

Pupils to learn simple  
nursery rhymes and songs  
in Arabic.

2. LANGUAGE STUDY

This should include a  
study of the following  
aspects:

Simple Nouns (Mas. and  
Fem.) together with  
Demonstrative Pronouns  
(Hadha and Hadhihi) and  
the Interrogative  
particle "Ma"; the  
Definite Article ;  
Personal (Independent)  
Pronouns (Ana, Anta, Anti,  
Huwa and Hiya) together with  
the Interrogative Particle  
"Man" and "Hal" with the  
words "Na'am and La"; the  
Prepositions (Fi'Ala and  
Tahta) together with the  
Interrogative "Ayna"; the  
Possessive Pronouns (for  
"my", "your" (m+f), his and  
her); the Preposition "Inda"  
with the above Possessive  
Pronouns; Numerals (1-10)  
simple counting (not in  
context); Adjectives (mas.  
and fem. singular)



### 3. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Opportunities should be presented for:

1. consolidating pupils grasp of and promoting their language use of items listed in paragraph 2 above;
2. promoting pupils competence in handwriting skills;
3. construction of simple sentences in Arabic;
4. promoting pupils ability to spell correctly and to master the art of handwriting through transcription and dictation exercises.



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قَالَتْ أُمُّ : " إِذْ هَبِي مَعَ هَذِهِ إِصَابَةِ إِلَيَّ  
جَدِّكَ ، وَلَا تَتَكَلَّمِي مَعَ أَحَدٍ ."  
تَلُوْحُ سَمِيرَةٌ أُمُّهَا .



تَخْتَارَتْ سَیْرَةَ أَزْهَارٍ لِحَدِيثِهَا.  
تُحِبُّ جَدَّةً أَزْهَارًا.



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يَنَامُ الذِّئْبُ فِي سَرِيرِ جَدَّةٍ .

يَنْتَظِرُ الذِّئْبُ سَمِيرَةً .

دَقَّتْ سَمِيرَةٌ عَلَى الْبَابِ .

قَالَ الذِّئْبُ : " مَنْ هُنَاكَ ؟ "

قَالَتْ سَمِيرَةٌ : " أَنَا سَمِيرَةٌ . "

قَالَ الذِّئْبُ : " أَذْخُلِي ؟ "



تُسَاعِدِينِي ! تَسَاعِدِينِي ! تَصْرُخُ سَمِيرَةٌ.  
يَسْمَعُ الْخَطَّابُ صَوْتَ سَمِيرَةٍ.  
يَفِرُّ الذِّبُّ بَعِيداً.



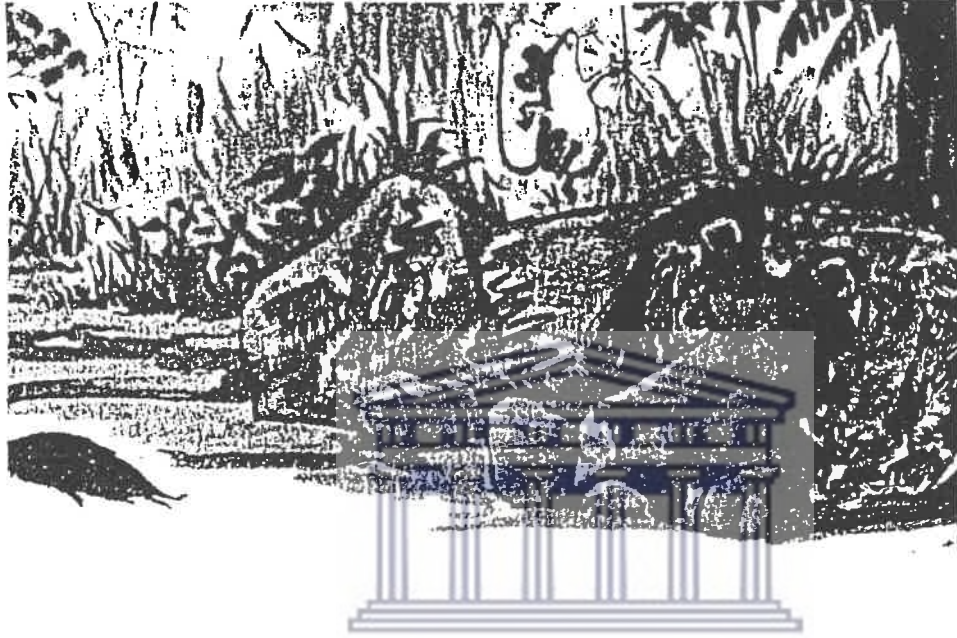
الأَسَدُ



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الْفَأْرُ

# الأسد والفأر



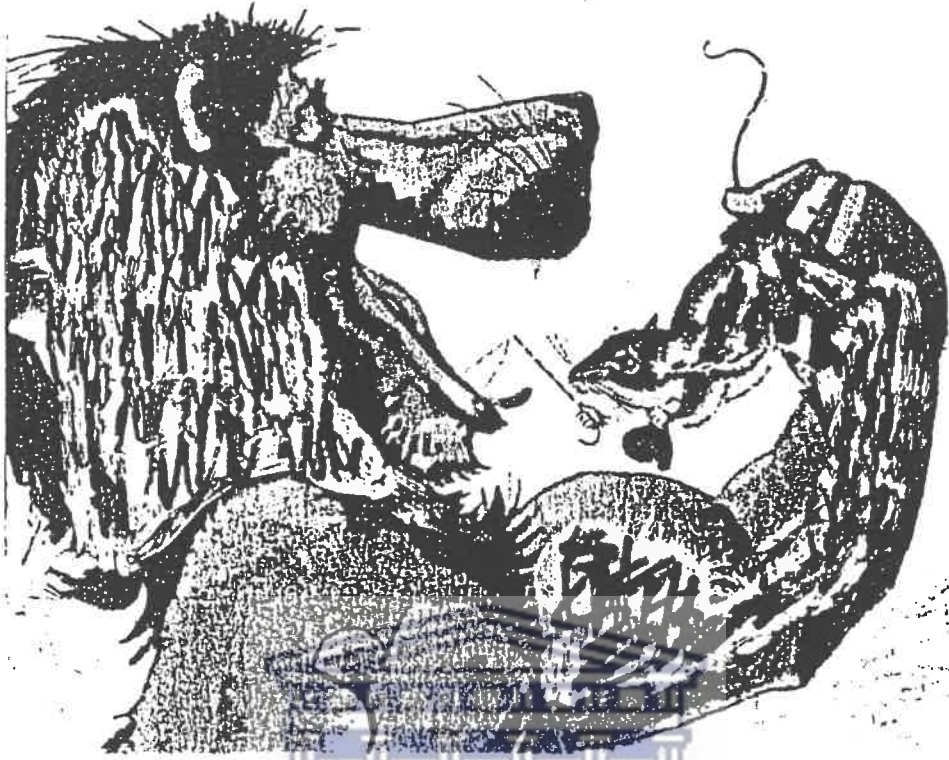
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فِي يَوْمٍ مِنْ الْأَيَّامِ يَجْرِي

الأسدُ فِي الْغَابَةِ . جَلَسَ تَحْتَ

الشَّجَرَةِ وَ نَامَ . يَجْرِي الْفَأْرُ عَلَى

ظَهْرِ الْأَسَدِ وَيَمْشِي نَحْوًا أَدْنَى الْأَسَدِ .



يَشْعُرُ الْأَسَدُ الْفَأْرَ فِي أُذُنِهِ. أَخَذَ الْفَأْرُ

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وَيُرِيدُ أَنْ يَأْكُلَهُ.

قَالَ الْفَأْرُ: "لَا تَأْكُلْنِي. أَتُرْكِنِي،

أَتُرْكِنِي. رُبَّمَا أُسْتَطِيعُ

أَنْ أَسَاعِدَكَ فِي الْمُسْتَقْبَلِ."

قَالَ الْأُسْدُ: "لَا تَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ تُسَاعِدَ بِنِي

أَنْتَ صَغِيرٌ وَأَنَا كَبِيرٌ وَقَوِيٌّ"

قَالَ الْفَأْرُ: "أَنَا صَغِيرٌ جِدًّا،

وَلَا تَأْكُلُ لِي."

قَالَ الْأُسْدُ: "أَنْتَ صَحِيحٌ، أَنْتَ

صَغِيرٌ". يَتْرُكُ الْأُسْدُ الْفَأْرَ.



”تُسَاعِدِ يَنِي، تُسَاعِدِ يَنِي،“

تُسَاعِدِ يَنِي مِنْ هَذِهِ مَكِيدَةٍ“

يَصْرُخُ الْأَسَدُ.

سَمِعَ الْحَيَوَانَاتِ صَرِيحُ الْأَسَدِ

وَلَكِنْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَحَدًا أَنْ يُسَاعِدَهُ.

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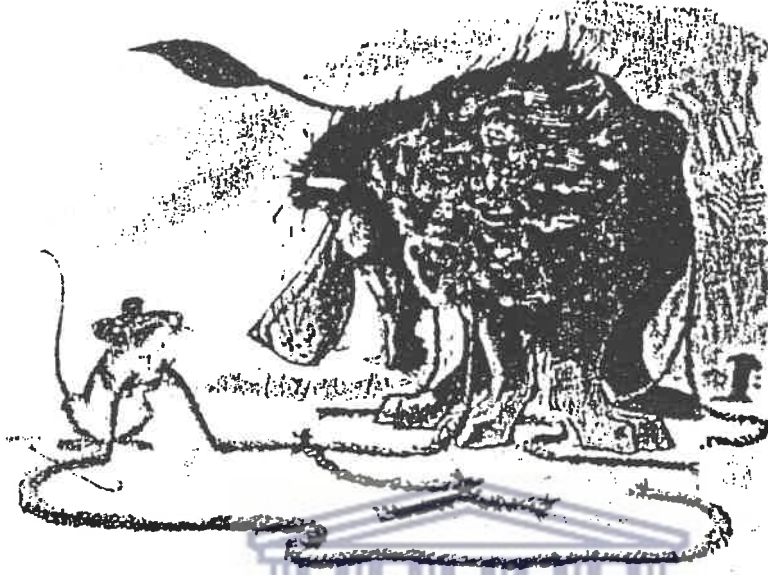
يَبْكِي الْأَسَدُ وَيَقُولُ: "أَلَمْ تُسَاعِدِ يَنِّي  
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أَحَدًا مِنْ هَذِهِ مَكِيدَةٌ؟

يَسْمَعُ الْفَأْرُ صَرْيْحُ الْأَسَدِ.

قَالَ الْفَأْرُ: "لَا تَبْكِي، قُلْتُ لَكَ فِي

الْمَاضِي أَنَا سَأَسَاعِدُكَ."



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أَكَلَ الْفَأْرُ الْحَبْلُ بَعْدَ الْحَبْلِ .

فِي نِهَآيَةِ أَصْبَحَ الْأَسَدُ مُتَّحِرًا .

قَالَ الْأَسَدُ لِفَأْرٍ: "أَنْتَ صَدِيقِي،

شُكْرًا لِمُسَاعَدَتِكَ .



WORKSHEETS

Due to time constraints the following tests could not be administered to the pupils, but have been included here.

"Red Riding Hood" - "Sameera"

Choose the correct word and complete the sentence:

١. قالت أم : " ..... مع اصابة الى جد تك.

ارجعي                      اذهي                      اخرجي

٢. ..... سيرة امها.

تلوح                      تجري                      تنادي

٣. تختارت سيرة ..... لجدها.

زهرة                      شجرة                      أزهار

٤. ..... الذئب في سرير جدة.

قرأ                      ينام                      يضحك

٥. ..... الخطا بصت سيرة.

يسمع                      يبكي                      يأكل

State whether the following sentences are TRUE or FALSE:

١. ذهبت سيرة مع الكرة إلى جدتها.

.....

٢. تلوح سيرة أمها .

.....

٣. تبيع سيرة أزهار لجدتها.

.....

٤. ينتظر الذئب لسيرة.

.....

٥. أكل الذئب سيرة.

.....

Rearrange the words to make a complete sentence:

١. أحد / تتكلمي / لا / مع

---

٢. سيرة / أمها / تلوح

---

٣. أزهار / تحب / جدة

---

٤. سيرة / الباب / على / دقت

---

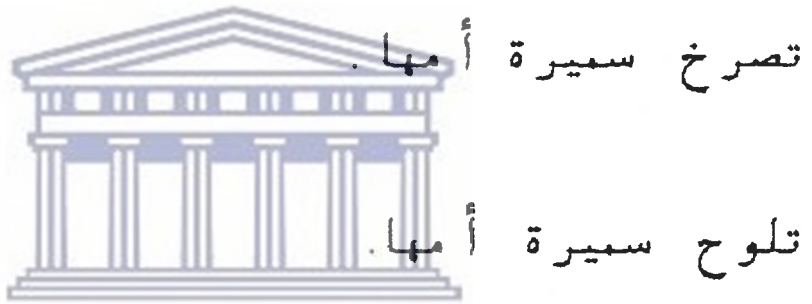
٥. الذئب / بعيداً / يفر

---

Rearrange the following sentences in its proper sequence:

تختارت سيرة أزهار لجدتها .

دقت سيرة على الباب .



تصرخ سيرة أمها .

تلوح سيرة أمها .

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ينام الذئب في سرير جدة .

إذهب مع هذه إصابة إلى جدتك .

يفر الذئب بعيداً .

"The Lion and the Mouse".

Choose the correct word and complete the sentence:

١. .... الأسد تحت الشجرة و نام.  
قام جلس يجري

٢. قال الفأر: " لا تأكلني ..... "  
أتركني أكلني أضربني

٣. قال الفأر: " أنا ..... جداً.  
كبير طويل صغير  
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٤. .... الحيوانات صرخ الأسد.  
ضرب أكل سمع

٥. أكل ..... الحبل بعد الحبل.  
الفيل الفأر الأسد

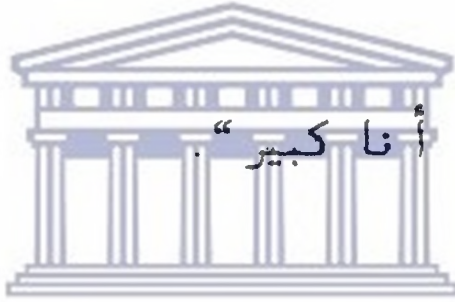
State whether the following sentences are TRUE or FALSE:

١. قام الأسد فوق الشجرة.

.....

٢. يريد الأسد أن يأكل الفأر.

.....



٣. قال الفأر: "أنا كبير".

.....

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٤. لا يسمع الحيوانات صرير الأسد.

.....

٥. قال الأسد: "شكراً لبساطك".

.....

Rearrange the words to make a complete sentence:

١. و / الشجرة / نام / جلس / تحت

.....

٢. الفأر / في / يشعر / أذنه / الأسد

.....



٣. في / المستقبل / أساعدك

.....

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٤. الأسد / يترك / الفار

.....

٥. صريخ / الأسد / سمع / الحيوانات

.....

Rearrange the following sentences in its proper sequence:

يصرخ الأسد

أكل الفأر الحبل بعد الحبل



جلس الأسد تحت الشجرة

يسمع الفأر صريخ الأسد

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أستطيع أن أساعدك في المستقبل

قال الفأر: "أنا صغير جداً"



## Glossary of Arabic Terms

Below are some terms and concepts which might be unfamiliar or unclear to readers and scholars of Education.

*Madrassa*: Islamic religious instruction classes conducted after school hours.

*Kalima / Kalimaat*: Proclamation of faith in Allah.

*Sura / Suwar*: Passages from the *Qur'an*. The shortest *sura* consists of three verses and the longest 286 verses.

*Yassarnal Qur'an*: Textbook used to teach the recognition and pronunciation of Arabic words.

*Qur'an*: Holy scripture of the Muslims revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).



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